To the incoming Jewish college students all across America, congratulations on finishing high school and heading off on this next great adventure! While we are only a bit ahead of you, we’re eager to share some insights that we’ve gained from our years at Northwestern University and the University of Michigan.

Jewish and pro-Israel students can face unique challenges on the college campus. The atmosphere isn’t always friendly, and you might find it somewhat intimidating. To help address these difficulties, we have drawn up this list of tips based on our own experiences. Please feel free to share it with your friends!

1. **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY ON CAMPUS**
   You will be surrounded by a multitude of intellectually curious people who care about learning. Don’t be afraid to venture outside your comfort zone, ask questions, and engage in meaningful dialogue. You will encounter people with different worldviews and from different walks of life—let that motivate you to learn.

2. **THERE IS ALWAYS A COMMUNITY FOR YOU**
   At first, college life can seem daunting. Make the effort to immerse yourself in an array of campus activities and groups, including but not limited to Hillel. Such involvement can make a large campus more manageable. For the first time in your life, your Jewish identity is entirely in your own hands, and the decision to engage Jewishly is yours alone. Explore the Jewish experiences that already exist on campus, and go out and create your own.

3. **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**
   Learn about BDS, the movement to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel, as well as other hot topics, current events, and political issues. Since supporting Israel can be unpopular on college campuses, knowing how to advocate for the Jewish state is vital. Having facts at your fingertips will help you handle these difficult and complex conversations with confidence.
UTILIZE YOUR RESOURCES
You are surrounded by some of the top minds in any given field. These professors are there to help you; they are amazing assets. Stop by during office hours, stay after class, sit in the front, ask your professors to join you for coffee or a meal. They will appreciate it. Bear in mind, though, that however brilliant they may be, you are not obligated to share their opinions.

LISTEN TO LEARN, NOT TO RESPOND
When a student arrives at college, there is a tendency to think: “How can I make a name for myself?” But you won’t learn about the world and the people around you by talking at them. Realize that you are not always going to be the smartest person in the room. The best way to learn is to receive, observe, and listen to people share their stories. As the old saying goes, “You have two ears and one mouth; use them in that proportion.”

THINGS TAKE TIME
Entering college marks a huge transition in your life. Take it slow. Take a deep breath and recognize that things do not happen overnight. You may not meet your best college friends during orientation. You may not ace every test in a subject you have never taken before. Cut yourself some slack because, contrary to the way it may look on Instagram, everyone has a hard time adjusting.

You are embarking on the most incredible four years; leverage every opportunity. Remember, there is no one single path for college success. Your college experience belongs to you. Try new things. Go to a football game, travel to Israel, audition for the next musical, attend a Shabbat dinner, and take classes that challenge your mind.

Best of luck as you begin this next chapter. We’ll be rooting for you!

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